

2

Engl. Theatre vol. 92

T H E
FATAL FALSEHOOD;
A
T R A G E D Y.

AS IT IS ACTED
AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL,
I N
COVENT-GARDEN.

B Y
THE AUTHOR OF PERCY.

Wm. Hamilton Esq.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

M DCC LXXIX.

(Price One Shilling and Six Pence.)

FATAL FALLS

THE

AT THE



GOVERNMENT

THE

OF

GOVERNMENT

OF

GOVERNMENT

T O
COUNTESS BATHURST,
THIS TRAGEDY,
I S
VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
AS A SMALL TRIBUTE
TO HER MANY VIRTUES;
AND AS A GRATEFUL TESTIMONY
OF THE FRIENDSHIP WITH WHICH
SHE HONOURS
HER MOST OBEDIENT,
AND MOST OBLIGED,
HUMBLE SERVANT,

H. MORE.

TO
COUNTS BATHURST
THIS TRACT
VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
AS A SMALL TRIBUTE
TO HER MANY VIRTUES
AND AS A GRATEFUL TESTIMONY
OF THE FRIENDSHIP WITH WHICH
SHE HONOURS
HER MOST OBEDIENT
AND MOST OBLIGED
HUMBLE SERVANT,

H. M. O. R. F.

P R O L O G U E.

Written by the AUTHOR, and spoken by
Mr. HULL.

OUR modern Poets scarce know how to chuse
A subject worthy of the Tragic Muse;
For Bards so well have glean'd th' Historic field,
That scarce one sheaf th' exhausted ancients yield;
And these, our timid author leaves to men,
For classic themes demand a classic pen:
Yet still the wilds of fiction open lie,
A flow'ry prospect, and a boundless sky:
But hard the task the sober path to chuse,
And wand'ring Fancy's treacherous baits refuse.
—She dares not touch the Drama's nobler strings,
The fate of nations, and the fall of Kings;
The humbler scenes of private life she shews,
A simple story of domestic woes.
The weight of crowns, a kingdom's weal or woe,
How few can judge, because how few can know!
But here you all may boast the Critic's art,
Here, all are judges—who possess a heart.
To govern Empires is the lot of few,
But all who live have passions to subdue;
And, ev'n by Patriots let it be confess'd,
These Rebel Subjects ought to be suppress'd,
These Ravagers which spoil the human breast. }
Oh! deign to learn this obvious lesson here!
The verse is feeble, but the moral clear.
Your candour once endur'd our Author's lays,
Endure them now—that will be ample praise.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by R. B. SHERIDAN, Esq; and spoken
by Mr. LEE LEWES.

UNHAND me, gentlemen, by Heaven, I say,
I'll make a ghost of him who bars my way.

[Behind the scenes.]

Forth let me come—A Poetaster true,
As lean as Envy, and as baneful too;
On the dull audience let me vent my rage,
Or drive these female scribblers from the stage:
For scene or history, we've none but these,
The law of Liberty and Wit they seize
In Tragic—Comic—Pastoral—they dare to please. }
Each puny Bard must surely burst with spite,
To find that women with such fame can write:
But, oh, your partial favour is the cause,
Who feed their follies with such full applause;
Yet still our tribe shall seek to blast their fame,
And ridicule each fair pretender's aim;
Where the dull duties of domestic life,
Wage with the Muse's toils eternal strife.

What motley cares Corilla's mind perplex,
While maids and metaphors conspire to vex!
In studious deshabille behold her sit,
A letter'd gossip, and a housewife wit;
At once invoking, though for different views,
Her gods, her cook, her millener, and muse,
Round her strew'd room, a frippery chaos lies,
A chequer'd wreck of notable and wise;
Bills, Books, Caps, Couplets, Combs, a vary'd mass,
Oppress the toilet, and obscure the glass;
Unfinish'd here an Epigram is laid,
And there, a mantua-maker's Bill unpaid;
Here new-born Plays fore taste the town's applause,
There, dormant Patterns pine for future gauze;

A moral

E P I L O G U E. vii

*A moral Essay now is all her care,
 A Satire next, and then a Bill of Fare :
 A Scene she now projects, and now a Dish,
 Here's Act the First—and here—remove with Fish.
 Now while this Eye in a fine phrenzy rolls,
 That, soberly casts up a Bill for Coals ;
 Black Pins and Daggers in one leaf she sticks,
 And Tears and Thread, and Balls and Thimbles mix.*

*Sappho, 'tis true, long vers'd in epic song,
 For years esteem'd all household studies wrong ;
 When dire mishap, though neither shame nor sin,
 Sappho herself, and not her Muse, lies in.
 The virgin Nine in terror fly the bower,
 And matron Juno claims despotic power ;
 Soon Gothic bags the classic pile o'erturn,
 A candle-cup supplants the sacred urn ;
 Nor books, nor implements escape their rage,
 They spike the ink-stand, and they rend the page ;
 Poems and Plays one barbarous fate partake,
 Ovid and Plautus suffer at the stake,
 And Aristotle's only sav'd—to wrap plumb cake.*

*Yet, shall a woman tempt the Tragic Scene ?
 And dare—but hold—I must repress my spleen ;
 I see your hearts are pledg'd to her applause,
 While Shakespear's spirit seems to aid her cause ;
 Well pleas'd to aid—since o'er his sacred bier
 A female hand did ample trophies rear,
 And gave the greenest laurel that is worshipp'd there.*

Dra-

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Earl Guildford, ——— Mr. Clarke.
Rivers, his son, ——— Mr. Lewis.
Orlando, a young Italian Count, Mr. Wroughton.
Bertrand, ——— Mr. Aickin.

W O M E N.

Emmelina, ——— Miss Young.
Julia, ——— Mrs. Hartley.

S C E N E, Earl Guildford's Castle.

THE
FATAL FALSEHOOD:
A
TRAGEDY.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE, an Apartment in Guildford
Castle.

Enter BERTRAND.

WHAT fools are serious melancholy villains!
I play a surer game, and screen my heart
With easy looks, and undesigned smiles;
And while my actions spring from sober thought,
They still appear th' effect of wild caprice,
And I, the thoughtless slave of giddy chance.
What but this frankness has engag'd the promise
Of young Orlando, to confide to me,
That secret grief which preys upon his heart?
'Tis dangerous, indiscreet hypocrisy
To seem too good: I am the careless Bertrand,

B

The

2 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

The honest, undefining, plain, blunt man:
The follies I avow cloke those I hide,
For who will search where nothing seems conceal'd?

'Tis rogues of solid, prudent, grave demeanor
Excite suspicion; men on whose dark brow
Discretion, with his iron hand has grav'd
The deep-mark'd characters of thoughtfulness.

Here comes my uncle, venerable Guildford,
Whom I cou'd honour, were he not the father
Of that aspiring boy, who fills the gap
'Twixt me and fortune;—Rivers, how I hate thee!

Enter GUILDFORD.

How fares my noble uncle?

GUILDFORD.

Honest Bertrand!

I must complain we have so seldom met;
Where do you keep? believe me we have miss'd you.

BERTRAND.

O, my good Lord, your pardon—spare me, Sir,
For there are follies in a young man's life,
And idle thoughtless hours which I should blush
To lay before your wife and temperate age.

GUILDFORD.

Well, be it so—youth has a privilege,
And I should be ashamed could I forget
I have myself been young, and harshly chide
The not ungraceful levity of youth.
Prudence becomes moroseness, when it makes
A rigid inquisition of the fault,
Not of the man, perhaps, but of his youth:
Foibles that shame the head on which old Time
Has

A T R A G E D Y. 3

Has shower'd his snow, are then most pardonable,
And age has many a weakness of its own.

B E R T R A N D.

Your gentleness, my Lord, and mild reproof,
Correct the wandrings of misguided youth,
More than rebuke, and shame it into virtue.

G U I L D F O R D.

Saw you my beauteous ward, the Lady Julia?

B E R T R A N D.

She past this way, and with her your fair
daughter,
Your Emmelina.

G U I L D F O R D.

Call them both my daughters,
For scarce is Emmelina dearer to me,
Than Julia, the lov'd child of my adoption;
The hour approaches too, (and blest it, heaven,
With thy benigneft, kindliest influence!)
When Julia shall indeed become my daughter,
Shall, in obedience to her father's will,
Crown the impatient vows of my brave son,
And richly pay him for his dangers past.

B E R T R A N D.

Oft have I wonder'd how the gallant Rivers,
Youthful and ardent, doating to excess,
Cou'd dare the dangers of uncertain war,
E'er marriage had confirm'd his claim to Julia.

G U I L D F O R D.

'Twas the condition of her father's will,
My brave old fellow-soldier, and my friend;
He wish'd to see our ancient houses join'd
By this, our children's union; but the veteran
So highly valued military prowess,
That he bequeath'd his fortunes and his daughter

4 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

To my young Rivers, on these terms alone,
That he shou'd early seek renown in arms ;
And if he from the field return'd a conqueror,
That fun which saw him come victorious home
Shou'd witness their espousals. Yet he comes not !
The event of war is to the brave uncertain,
Nor can desert in arms ensure success.

BERTRAND.

Yet fame speaks loudly of his early valour.

GUILDFORD.

E'er since th' Italian Count, the young Orlando,
My Rivers' bosom friend has been my guest,
The glory of my son is all his theme :
Oh ! he recounts his virtues with such joy,
Dwells on his merit with a zeal so warm,
As to his gen'rous heart pays back again
The praises he bestows.

BERTRAND.

Orlando's noble,
He's of a tender, brave, and gallant nature,
Of honour most romantic, with such graces,
As charm all womankind.

GUILDFORD.

And here comes one,
To whom the story of Orlando's praise
Sounds like sweet music.

BERTRAND.

What, your charming daughter?
Yes, I suspect she loves th' Italian Count ; [*Aside.*
That must not be. Now to observe her closely.

Enter

A T R A G E D Y.

5

Enter EMMELINA.

GUILD FORD.

Come hither, Emmelina: we were speaking
Of the young Count Orlando. What think you
Of this accomplish'd stranger?

E M M E L I N A. (*Confused.*)

Sir, your pardon—

But as my father's guest, my brother's friend,
I do esteem the Count.

GUILD FORD.

Nay, he has merit

Might justify thy friendship if he wanted
The claims thou mention'st; yet I mean to
blame him.

E M M E L I N A.

What has he done that cou'd offend my father?
For you are just and are not angry lightly,
And he is mild, unapt to give offence,
As you to be offended.

GUILD FORD.

Nay 'tis not much:

Why does Orlando shun of late my presence?
Why lose that chearful and becoming spirit
Which lately charm'd us all? Rivers will chide us,
Shou'd he return, and find his friend unhappy.
He is not what he was. What says my child?

E M M E L I N A.

My Lord, when first my brother's friend arriv'd—
Be still, my heart.

[*Aside.*]

B E R T R A N D.

She dares not use his name,
Her brother's friend!

[*Aside.*]

E M-

6 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

EMMELINA.

When first your noble guest
Came from that voyage, he kindly undertook
To ease our terrors for my Rivers' safety,
When we believ'd him dead, he seem'd most
happy,

And shar'd the universal joy he gave.
Of late he is less gay; my brother's absence
(Or I mistake) disturbs his friend's repose;
Nor is it strange, one mind informs them both,
Each is the very soul that warms the other,
And both are wretched, or are bless'd together.

BERTRAND.

Why trembles my fair cousin?

EMMELINA.

Can I think
That my lov'd brother's life has been in danger,
Nor feel a strong emotion!

BERTRAND. (*Ironically.*)

Generous pity!
But when that danger has so long been past,
You shou'd forget your terrors.

EMMELINA.

I shall never;
For when I think that danger sprung from friend-
ship,
That Rivers, to preserve another's life,
Incurr'd this peril, still my wonder rises.

BERTRAND.

And why another's life? Why not Orlando's?
Such caution more betrays than honest freedom.

GUILDFORD.

He's still the same, the gibing thoughtless Ber-
trand,
Severe of speech, but ignorant of malice.

[Exit Guildford: Emmelina going.
BER-

A T R A G E D Y. 7

B E R T R A N D.

Stay, my fair cousin ; still with adverse eyes
You view me. Say had I Orlando's form,
I mean, were I like him your brother's friend,
Then wou'd your looks be turn'd thus coldly on
me ?

E M M E L I N A.

But that I know your levity means nothing,
And that your heart accords not with your tongue,
This wou'd offend me.

B E R T R A N D.

Come, confess the truth,
That this gay Florentine, this Tuscan rover,
Has won your easy heart, and given you his :
I know the whole, I'm of his secret council,
He has confess'd ——

E M M E L I N A.

Ha ! what has he confess'd.

B E R T R A N D.

That you are wondrous fair : nay, nothing farther ;
How disappointment fires her angry cheek !
Yourself have told the rest, your looks avow it,
Your eyes are honest, nor conceal the secret.

E M M E L I N A.

Conceal ! Virtue has nothing to conceal ;
So far from dreading, it solicits notice,
And wishes every secret thought it harbours,
Bare to the eye of men, as 'tis to heav'n.

B E R T R A N D.

Yet mark me well, trust not Orlando's truth ;
The citron groves have heard his amorous vows
Breath'd out to many a beauteous maid of Florence ;
Bred in those softer climes, his roving heart
Ne'er

Ne'er learn'd to think fidelity a virtue,
But laughs at tales of British constancy.
But see Orlando comes—perhaps to seek you,
With eyes bent downwards, and with folded arms,
Disorder'd looks, and negligent attire,
And all the careless equipage of love,
He bends this way. Why does the mounting
blood

[Exit Bertrand.

No more, but leave me.

Enter ORLANDO *and* BERTRAND.

Now to alarm her heart, and search out his.

[*Aside.*

We crave your pardon, beauteous Emmelina,
If rudely we intrude upon your thoughts;
Thoughts pure as infants' dreams, or angels'
wishes,
And gentle as the breast from whence they spring.

EM-

A T R A G E D Y.

9

E M M E L I N A.

Be still, my heart, nor let him see thy weakness.

[Aside.]

We are much bound to thank you, cousin Bertrand,

That since your late return, the Count Orlando
Appears once more among us.—Say, my Lord,
Why have you shunn'd your friends' society?
Was it well done? My father bade me chide you;
I am not made for chiding, but he bade me;
He says, no more you rise at early dawn
With him to chase the boar; I pleaded for you,
Told him 'twas savage sport.

O R L A N D O.

What was his answer?

E M M E L I N A.

He said 'twas sport for heroes, and made heroes;
That hunting was the very school of war,
Taught our brave youth to shine in nobler fields,
Preserv'd 'em from the rust of dull inaction,
Train'd 'em for arms, and fitted them for conquest.

O R L A N D O.

O, my fair advocate! scarce can I grieve
To have done wrong, since my offence has gain'd
So sweet a pleader.

B E R T R A N D. *(Aside.)*

So, I like this well;

Full of respect, but cold.

E M M E L I N A.

My lord, your pardon;
My father waits my coming, I attend him.

[Exit.]

B E R T R A N D.

In truth, my Lord, you're a right happy man;
Her parting look proclaims that you are blest;

C

The

10 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

The crimson blushes on her cheek display'd
A gentle strife 'twixt modesty and love:
Discretion strove to dash the rising joy,
But conquering love prevail'd and told the tale.
My Lord, you answer not.

ORLANDO.

What shall I say?

Oh, could'st thou read my heart!

BERTRAND.

The hour is come
When my impatient friendship claims that trust
Which I so oft have press'd, and you have promis'd.

ORLANDO.

I cannot tell thee; 'tis a tale of guilt;
How shall I speak? my resolution sickens;
All virtuous men will shun me, thou wilt scorn me,
And fly the foul contagion of my crime.

BERTRAND.

My bosom is not steel'd with that harsh prudence
Which wou'd reproach thy failings; tell me all;
The proudest heart loves to repose its faults
Upon a breast that has itself a tincture
Of human weakness; I have frailties too,
Frailties that teach me how to pity thine.
What, silent still? Thou lov'st my beauteous
cousin!
Have I not guess'd?

ORLANDO.

I own that she has charms
Might warm a frozen stoic into love;
Tempt hermits back again to that bad world
They had renounc'd, and make religious men
Forgetful of their holy vows to heaven;
Yet Bertrand—come, I'll tell thee all my weak-
ness:

Thou

A T R A G E D Y. II

Thou hast a tender sympathising heart,
And art not rigid to a friend's defects.
That heav'nly form I view with eyes as cold
As marble images of lifeless saints ;
I see, and know the workmanship divine,
My judgment owns her exquisite perfections,
But my rebellious heart denies her claim.

B E R T R A N D.

What do I hear ! you love her not !

O R L A N D O.

Oh, Bertrand!

For pity do not hate me ; but thou must,
For am I not at variance with myself ?
Yet shall I wrong her gentle trusting nature,
And spurn the heart I labour'd to obtain ?
She loves me, Bertrand, Oh ! too sure she loves me,
Loves me with tenderest, truest, chastest passion ;
Loves me, oh my curs'd fate ! as I love —

Julia.

B E R T R A N D.

Heard I aright ? Did you not speak of Julia ?
Julia, the lovely ward of my good uncle ?
Julia ! the mistress of your friend, of Rivers ?

O R L A N D O.

Go on, go on, and urge me with my guilt,
Display my crime in all its native horrors ;
Tell me some legend of infernal falsehood,
Tell me some dreadful tale of perjur'd friendship,
Of trust betray'd, and innocence deceiv'd ;
Place the black chronicle before my eyes,
With added guilt and aggravated horror,
That I may see the evils which await me,
Nor pull such fatal mischiefs on my head,
As with my ruin must involve the fate
Of all I love on earth.

B E R -

12 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

BERTRAND.

Just as I wish. [*Aside.*]

ORLANDO.

Thou know'st I left my native Italy,
Directed hither by the noble Rivers,
To ease his father's fears, who thought he fell
In that engagement where we both were wounded;
His was a glorious wound, gained in the cause
Of gen'rous friendship, for an hostile spear
Aim'd at my breast, Rivers in his receiv'd,
Sav'd my devoted life, and won my soul.

BERTRAND.

So far I knew, but what of Emmelina?

ORLANDO.

Whether her gentle beauties first allur'd me,
Or whether peaceful scenes, and rural shades,
Or leisure, or the want of other objects,
Or solitude, apt to engender love,
Engag'd my soul, I know not, but I lov'd her.
We were together always, till the habit
Grew into something like necessity:
When Emmelina left me I was sad,
Nor knew a joy till Emmelina came,
Her soft society amus'd my mind,
Fill'd up my vacant heart, and touch'd my soul.
'Twas gratitude, 'twas friendship, 'twas esteem,
'Twas reason, 'twas persuasion, nay 'twas love.

BERTRAND.

But where was Julia?

ORLANDO.

Oh! too soon she came,
For when I saw that wond'rous form of beauty,
I stood entranc'd, like some astronomer,
Who, as he views the bright expanse of heaven,
Finds a new star. I gaz'd, and was undone;
Gaz'd

Gaz'd, and forgot the tender Emmelina,
Gaz'd, and forgot the gen'rous, trusting Rivers,
Forgot my faith, my friendship and my honour.

BERTRAND.

Does Julia know your love?

ORLANDO.

Forbid it heav'n!

What! think'st thou I am so far gone in guilt
As boldly to avow it? Bertrand, no,
For all the kingdoms of the spacious earth,
I wou'd not wrong my friend, or damn my honour.

BERTRAND.

Trust me, you judge too hardly of yourself.

ORLANDO.

Think I have lodg'd a secret in thy breast,
On which my peace, my fame, my all depends;
Long have I struggled with the fatal truth,
And scarce have dar'd to breathe it to myself;
For oh! too surely the first downward step,
The treacherous path that leads to guilty deeds,
Is, to make vice familiar to the mind. [Exit.

BERTRAND.

Am I awake? No, 'tis delusion all!
My wildest wishes never soar'd to this;
Fortune anticipates my plot; he loves her,
Not Emmelina, but the Lady Julia.
Orlando, yes, I'll play thee at my will;
Poor puppet! thou hast trusted to my hand
The strings by which I'll move thee to thy ruin,
And make thee too the instrument of vengeance,
Of glorious vengeance on the man I hate. [Exit.

End of the First Act.

A C T

14 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

ACT THE SECOND.

Enter JULIA and EMMELINA.

JULIA.

HOW many cares perplex the maid who loves!
Cares, which the vacant heart can never know.
You fondly tremble for a brother's life,
Orlando mourns the absence of a friend,
Guildford is anxious for a son's renown;
In my poor heart your various terrors meet,
With added fears, and fonder apprehensions;
They all unite in me, I feel for all,
His life, his fame, his absence, and his love:
For he may live to bless a sister's hopes,
May live to gratify impatient friendship,
May live to crown a father's house with honour,
May live to glory, and be dead to love.

EMMELINA.

Forbear these fears, they wound my brother's
honour,
Julia! a brave man must be ever faithful;
Cowards alone dare venture to be false,
Cowards alone dare injure trusting innocence,
And with bold perjuries affront high heaven.

JULIA.

I know his faith, and venerate his virtues;
I know his heart is tender as 'tis brave,

That

A T R A G E D Y. 15

That all his father's worth, his sister's softness,
Meet in his generous breast—and yet I fear—
Whoever lov'd like me, and did not fear?

Enter GUILD FORD.

GUILD FORD.

Where are my Friends, my daughter, where is
Julia?
How shall I speak the fulness of my heart?
My son, my Rivers, will this day return.

EMMELINA.

My dearest brother!

JULIA.

Ha! my Rivers comes!
Propitious heaven!

EMMELINA.

And yet my Julia trembles.

JULIA.

Have I not cause? my Rivers comes! but how?
I dread to ask, and yet I die to hear.
My Lord—you know the terms——

GUILD FORD.

He comes a conqueror!
He comes as Guildford's son shou'd ever come!
The battle's o'er, the English arms successful,
And Rivers, like an English warrior, hastens
To lay his laurels at the feet of beauty. [*Exit.*]

JULIA.

My joy oppresses me!

EMMELINA.

And see, Orlando!
How will the welcome news transport his soul,
And

16 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

And raise his drooping heart ! with caution tell
him,
Lest the o'erwhelming rapture be too much
For his dejected mind.

Enter ORLANDO and BERTRAND.

JULIA.

My Lord Orlando,
Wherefore that troubled air ? no more you dwell
On your once darling theme, you speak no more
The praises of your Rivers ; is he chang'd ?
Is he not still the gallant friend you lov'd,
As virtuous, and as valiant ?

ORLANDO.

Still the same,
He must be ever virtuous, ever valiant.

EMMELINA.

If Rivers is the same, then must I think
Orlando greatly chang'd ; you speak not of him,
Nor long for his return, as you were wont.
How did you use to spend the live-long day,
In telling some new wonders of your friend,
Till night broke in upon th' unfinish'd tale ;
And when 'twas o'er you wou'd begin again,
And we again wou'd listen with delight,
With fresh delight, as if we had not heard it !
Does Rivers less deserve, or you less love ?

ORLANDO.

Have I not lov'd him ? was my friendship cold ?
When any prais'd his glories in the field,
My raptur'd heart has bounded at the tale !
Methought I grew illustrious from his glory,
And rich from his renown ; to hear him prais'd,
More proud than if I had atchiev'd his deeds,
And

And reap'd the full-blown harvest of his fame.
How have I trembled for a life so dear,
When his too ardent soul, despising caution,
Has plung'd him in the foremost ranks of war,
As if in love with danger.

JULIA.

Valiant Rivers!
How does thy greatness justify my love!

BERTRAND.

He's distant far, so I may safely praise him.

[*Aside.*]

I claim some merit in my love of Rivers,
Since I admire the virtues that eclipse me;
With pleasure I survey those dazzling heights
My gay, inactive temper cannot reach.

EMMELINA.

Spoke like my honest cousin. Then, Orlando,
Since such the love you bear your noble friend,
How will your heart sustain the mighty joy
The news I tell will give you? Yes, Orlando,
Restrain the transports of your grateful friendship,
And hear, with moderation, hear me tell you
That Rivers will return——

ORLANDO.

How? when?

EMMELINA.

This day.

ORLANDO.

Impossible!

BERTRAND.

Then all my schemes are air.

[*Aside.*]

D

EM-

18 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

EMMELINA.

To-day I shall embrace my valiant brother!

JULIA.

You droop, my Lord: did you not hear her right?

She told you that your Rivers wou'd return,
To bless your friendship, and to crown our hopes.

ORLANDO.

He is most welcome! Is he not my friend?
You say my Rivers comes.—Thy arm, good Ber-
trand.

BERTRAND.

Joy to us all! joy to the Count Orlando!
Weak man, take care. [*Aside to Orlando.*]

EMMELINA.

My Lord! you are not well.

BERTRAND.

Surprise and joy oppress him; I myself
Partake his transports. Rouse, my Lord, for
shame.

EMMELINA.

How is it with you now?

ORLANDO.

Quite well—'tis past.

BERTRAND.

The wonder's past, and nought but joy remains.

Enter GUILDFORD and RIVERS.

GUILDFORD.

He's come! he's here! I have embrac'd my
warrior;
Now take me, heav'n, I have liv'd long enough.

JULIA.

JULIA.

My Lord, my Rivers!

RIVERS.

'Tis my Julia's self!

My life!

JULIA.

My hero! Do I then behold thee?

RIVERS.

Oh my full heart! expect not words, my Julia!

EMMELINA.

Rivers!

RIVERS.

My sister! what an hour is this!

My own Orlando too!

ORLANDO.

My noble friend!

RIVERS.

This is such prodigality of bliss,
I scarce can think it real. Honest Bertrand,
Your hand, your's, my Orlando, your's, my father;
And as a hand, I have a heart for all;
Love has enlarg'd it, from excess of love
I am become more capable of friendship.
My dearest Julia!

GUILDFORD.

She is thine, my son,
Thou hast deserv'd her nobly; thou hast won her,
Fulfill'd the terms——

RIVERS.

Therefore I dare not ask her;
I wou'd not claim my Julia as a debt,
But take her as a gift; and oh! I swear

20 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

The dearest, richest, choicest, noblest gift,
The bounty of indulgent heaven bestows.

[Guildford joins their hands.]

JULIA.

Spare me, my Lord, you scarcely are return'd—
Confusion stops my tongue—yet I will own
If there be truth or faith in woman's vows,
Then you have still been present to this heart,
And not a thought has wander'd from its duty.

[Exeunt Julia and Emmelina.]

RIVERS. (*Looking after Julia.*)

Oh, generous Julia!

ORLANDO. (*Aside to Bertrand.*)

Mark how much she loves him!

BERTRAND. (*Aside to Orlando.*)

Mere words, which the fond sex have always
ready.

RIVERS.

Forgive me, good Orlando, best of friends!
How my soul joys to meet thee on this shore!
Thus to embrace thee in my much lov'd England!

GUILDFORD.

England! the native soil, the land of heroes,
Where great Elizabeth the sceptre sways,
O'er a free, glorious, rich and happy people!
Philosophy, not cloister'd up in schools,
The speculative dream of idle monks,
Attir'd in attic robe, here roams at large,
Wisdom is wealth, and science is renown.
Here sacred laws protect the meanest subject,
The bread that toil procures fair freedom sweetens,
And every peasant eats his homely meal,
Content and free, Lord of his small domain.

RIVERS.

A TRAGEDY. 21

RIVERS.

Past are those gothic days, and grant, kind
 heav'n,
 They be forever past, when English subjects
 Were born the vassals of some tyrant lord!
 When free-soul'd men were basely handed down
 To the next heir, transmitted with their lands,
 The shameful legacy from sire to son!

GUILDFORD.

But while thy generous soul, my noble boy,
 Justly abhors oppression, yet revere
 The plain stern virtues of our rough forefathers:
 O never may the gallant sons of England
 Lose their plain, manly, native character,
 Forego the glorious charter nature gave 'em,
 Beyond what kings can give, or laws bestow,
 Of candour, courage, constancy, and truth!

[*Exeunt Guildford and Rivers.*]

ORLANDO.

Stay, Bertrand, stay—Oh, pity my distraction!
 This heart was never made to hide its feelings;
 I had near betray'd myself.

BERTRAND.

I trembled for you;
 Remember that the eye of love is piercing,
 And Emmelina mark'd you.

ORLANDO.

'Tis too much!
 My artless nature cannot bear disguise.
 Think what I felt when unsuspecting Rivers
 Press'd me with gen'rous rapture to his bosom,
 Profess'd an honest joy, and call'd me friend!
 I felt myself a traitor: yet I swear,

Yes,

22 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD

Yes, by that power who sees the thoughts of men,
I swear I love the gallant Rivers more
Than light or life! I love, but yet I fear him:
I shrunk before the lustre of his virtue——
I felt as I had wrong'd him—felt abash'd.
I cannot bear this conflict in my soul,
And therefore have resolv'd——

BERTRAND.

On what?

ORLANDO.

To fly.

BERTRAND.

To fly from Julia?

ORLANDO.

Yes, to fly from all,
From every thing I love; to fly from Rivers,
From Emmelina, from myself, from thee:
From Julia? no—that were impossible,
For I shall bear her image in my soul,
It is a part of me, the dearest part,
So closely interwoven with my being,
That I can never lose the dear remembrance,
Till I am robb'd of life and her together.

BERTRAND.

'Tis cowardly to fly.

ORLANDO.

To stay is base.

BERTRAND.

Where wou'd you go? How lost in thought he
stands! [*Aside.*
A vulgar villain now would use persuasion,
And

And by his very earnestness betray
 The thing he meant to hide; I'll coolly wait,
 Till the occasion shews me how to act,
 Then turn it to my purpose. Ho! Orlando!
 Where wou'd you go?

ORLANDO.

To everlasting solitude!
 Yes, I will shroud my youth in some dark cell,
 Where Disappointment steals Devotion's name,
 To cheat the wretched votary into ruin;
 There will I live, in love with misery;
 Ne'er shall the sight of mirth prophane my grief,
 The sound of joy shall never charm my ear,
 Nor music reach it, save when the slow bell
 Wakes the dull brotherhood to lifeless prayer.
 Then, when the slow-retreating world recedes,
 Desires are dead, and burning passions cold,
 And all things, but my Julia, are forgotten,
 One thought of her shall fire my languid soul,
 Warm the faint orison, and feed despair.

B E R T R A N D.

What! with monastic, lazy drones retire,
 And chaunt cold hymns with holy hypocrites?
 First perish all the sex! forbid it manhood!
 Where is your nobler self? for shame, Orlando,
 Renounce this superstitious, whining weakness,
 Or I shall blush to think I call'd you friend.

ORLANDO.

What can I do?

B E R T R A N D. (*After a pause.*)

Beg she'll defer the marriage
 But for one single day; do this, and leave
 The rest to me: she shall be thine.

O R -

24 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

How say'st thou?

What, wrong her virtue?

BERTRAND.

Still this cant of virtue!

This pompous shew of words without a meaning!
I grant that honour's something, manly honour,
I'd fight, I'd burn, I'd bleed, I'd die for honour,
But what's this virtue?

ORLANDO.

Ask you what it is?

Why 'tis what libertines themselves adore;
'Tis the celestial colouring of beauty,
Which wakens gallantry, and fans desire
Beyond the rosy lip, or starry eye;
Nay, she who ministers to guilty pleasures
Puts on its semblance when she most wou'd please.
'Tis heaven's own energy, th' ætherial flame
Which animates cold beauty into spirit.

[Exit.

Manet BERTRAND.

Cutse on his principles! Yet I shall shake them,
And bend his pliant spirit to my will,
Now while 'tis warm with passion, and will take
Whatever mould my forming hand will give it.
'Tis worthy of my genius! Then I love
This Emmelina—true she loves not me—
But shou'd young Rivers die, his father's lands
On me devolve—Is Rivers then immortal?
Come—Guildford's lands, and his proud daughter's hand
Are worth some thought: why what sharp spurs
to genius,
Are mischief, poverty, revenge and love!

[Exit Bertrand.

Enter

Enter EMMELINA and RIVERS talking.

EMMELINA.

Yet do not blame Orlando, good my brother,
He's still the same, that brave, frank heart you
lov'd;

Only his temper's chang'd, he is grown sad,
But that's no fault, I only am to blame;
Fond foolish heart, to give itself away
To one who gives me nothing in return!

RIVERS.

How's this! my father said Orlando lov'd thee.

EMMELINA.

Indeed I thought so—he was kinder once;
Nay still he loves, or my poor heart deceives me.

RIVERS.

If he has wrong'd thee! yet I know he could
not;

His gallant soul is all made up of virtues,
And I would rather doubt myself than him.
Yet tell me all the story of your loves,
And let a brother's fondness sooth thy cares.

EMMELINA.

When to this castle first Orlando came,
A welcome guest to all, to me most welcome;
Yes, spite of maiden shame, and burning blushes,
Let me confess he was most welcome to me!
At first my foolish heart so much deceiv'd me,
I thought I lov'd him for my brother's sake;
But when I closely search'd this bosom traitor,
I found, alas! I lov'd him for his own.

E

R I-

26 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

RIVERS.

Blush not to own it, 'twas a well plac'd flame!
I glory in the merit of my friend,
And love my sister more for loving him.

EMMELINA.

He talk'd of you, I listen'd with delight,
And thought it was the subject only charm'd me;
But when Orlando chose another theme,
Forgive me, Rivers, but I listen'd still
With undiminish'd joy—he talk'd of love,
Nor was that theme less grateful than the former.
I seem'd the very idol of his soul;
Rivers, he said, would thank me for the friend-
ship
I bore to his Orlando; I believ'd him.
Julia was absent then—but what of Julia?

RIVERS.

Aye, what of her indeed? why nam'd you
Julia?
You could not surely think? no that were wild.
Why did you mention Julia?

EMMELINA.

Nay 'twas nothing,
'Twas accident, nor had my words a meaning;
If I did name her, 'twas to note the time,
To mark the period of Orlando's coldness,
The circumstance was casual, and but meant
To date the time, it aim'd at nothing farther.

RIVERS.

'Tis very like, no more, I'm fatisfied;
You talk as I had doubts; I have no doubts;
Why do you labour to destroy suspicions

Which

Which never had a birth? is she not mine?
Mine by the fondest ties of dear affection?
But did Orlando change at her return?
Did he grow cold? It could not be for that,
And yet you say 'twas at that time it happen'd.
Was it just then? I have no cause for asking,
But for the love I bear my dearest sister.

EMMELINA.

'Twas as I said.

RIVERS.

He loves thee, Emmelina:
These starts of passion, this unquiet temper
Betray how much he loves thee: yes, my sister,
He fears to lose thee, fears his father's will
May dash his rising hopes, nor give thee to him.

EMMELINA.

Oh, flatterer! thus to sooth my easy nature
With tales of possible though doubtful bliss!
Because it may be true, my credulous heart
Whispers it is, and fondly loves to cherish
The feeble glimmering of a sickly hope.

RIVERS.

This precious moment, worth a tedious age
Of vulgar time, I've stol'n from love and Julia;
She waits my coming, and a longer stay
Were treason to her beauty, and my love.

[*Excunt.*]

End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE, a Garden.

EMMELINA.

WHY do my feet unbidden seek this grove?
 Why do I trace his steps? I thought him here;
 This is his hour of walking, and these shades
 His daily haunt; oft have they heard his vows:
 Ah! fatal vows which stole my peace away!
 But now he shun's my presence; yet who knows,
 He may not be ungrateful, but unhappy;
 Yes, he will come to clear his past offences,
 With such prevailing eloquence will plead,
 So mourn his former coldness and neglect,
 And by ten thousand graceful ways repair them,
 That I shall think I never was offended.
 He comes, and every doubt's at once dispell'd;
 'Twas fancy all, he never meant to wrong me.

Enter ORLANDO.

ORLANDO.

Why at this hour of universal joy,
 When every heart beats high with grateful rapture,
 And pleasure dances her enchanting round,
 O tell me why, at this auspicious hour,
 You quit the joyful circle of your friends?
 " Rob social pleasures of its sweetest charm,
 " And

“ And leave a void ev’n in the happiest hearts,
 “ An aching void which only you can fill ?”
 Why seek alone these unfrequented shades,
 These gloomy haunts unfit for blooming beauty,
 But made for meditation and misfortune ?

EMMELINA.

I might retort the charge, my lord Orlando,
 And ask you how the bosom-friend of Rivers,
 Whom he has held deep-rooted in his heart,
 Beyond a brother’s dearneſs, fav’d his life,
 And cheriſh’d it when fav’d beyond his own,
 I might enquire, why when this Rivers comes,
 After long tedious months of expectation,
 Alive, victorious, and as firm in friendship
 As fondneſs cou’d have wiſh’d, or fancy feign’d ;
 I might enquire why thus Orlando ſhuns him,
 Why thus he courts this melancholy gloom,
 As if he were at variance with delight,
 And ſcorn’d to mingle in the general joy ?

ORLANDO.

Oh, my fair monitrefs ! I have deſerv’d
 Your gentle cenſure.

EMMELINA.

You will then grow chearful,
 Nor give your friends, who love you, room for
 blame.

Julia complains too of you.

ORLANDO.

Ah ! does Julia ?

If Julia chides me I have erred indeed,
 For harſhneſs is a ſtranger to her nature.
 But why does ſhe complain ? O tell me where-
 fore ?

That I may ſoon repair th’ unwilling crime,
 And prove my heart was guiltleſs of the offence.

EM-

30 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

EMMELINA.

Why so alarm'd?

ORLANDO.

Alarm'd!

EMMELINA.

Indeed you seem'd so.

ORLANDO.

Sure you mistake. Alarm'd? oh no I was not;
There was no cause—I cou'd not be alarm'd
Upon so slight a ground. Something you said,
But what I know not of your friend.

EMMELINA.

Did I?

ORLANDO.

That Julia was displeas'd—was it not so?
'Twas that, or something like it.

EMMELINA.

She complains

That you avoid her.

ORLANDO.

How! that I avoid her?

Did Julia say so? ah! you have forgot—
It cou'd not be.

EMMELINA.

Why are you terrified?

ORLANDO.

No.

Not terrified—I am not—but were those
Her very words? you might mistake her mean-
ing;

Did

Did Julia say Orlando shun'd her presence?
Oh, did she, cou'd she say so?

EMMELINA.

If she did,
Why this disorder? there's no cause.

ORLANDO.

No cause?
O there's a cause of dearer worth than empire!
Quick let me fly, and find the fair upbraider,
Tell her she wrongs me, tell her I wou'd die
Rather than meet her anger.

[*Emmelina faints.*

Ah, you faint!

What have I said? curse my imprudent tongue!
Look up, sweet innocence! my Emmelina—
My gentle friend awake! look up, fair creature!
'Tis your Orlando calls.

EMMELINA.

Orlando's voice!

Methought he talk'd of love—nay do not mock
me,

My heart is but a weak, a very weak one;
I am not well—perhaps I've been to blame.
Spare my confusion.

[*Exit Emmelina.*

ORLANDO.

So! I've betray'd my secret,
And struck a poison'd dagger to her heart,
Her innocent heart. Why what a wretch am I!
Ruin approaches, shall I tamely meet it,
And dally with destruction till it blast me?
No, I will fly thee, Julia, fly for ever.
Ha, fly! what then becomes of Emmelina?
Shall I abandon her? it must be so,

Better

32 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Better escape with this poor wreck of honour,
Than hazard all by staying.—Rivers here?

Enter RIVERS.

RIVERS.

The same. My other self! my own Orlando!
I came to seek thee; 'twas in thy kind bosom,
My suffering soul repos'd its secret cares,
When doubts and difficulties stood before me;
And now, now when my prosperous fortune shines,
And gilds the smiling hour with her bright beams,
Shall I become a niggard of my bliss,
Defraud thee of thy portion of my joys,
And rob thee of thy well-earn'd claim to share
them?

ORLANDO.

That I have ever lov'd thee, witness Heaven!
That I have thought thy friendship the best blessing
That mark'd the fortune of my happier days,
I here attest the sovereign judge of hearts!
Then think, O think what anguish I endure,
When I declare, in bitterness of spirit,
That we must part——

RIVERS.

What does Orlando mean?

ORLANDO.

That I must leave thee, Rivers, must renounce
Thy lov'd society.

RIVERS.

Thou hast been wrong'd,
Thy merit has been slighted; sure, my father,
Who knew how dear I held thee—but he cou'd
not—

OR-

ORLANDO.

He is 'all goodness ; no—there is a cause—
Seek not to know it.

RIVERS.

Now, by holy friendship !
I swear thou shalt not leave me ; what, just now ?
When I have safely pass'd so many perils,
Escap'd so many threat'ning deaths ? return'd
To the kind arms of long desiring friendship ;
And now, when I expected such a welcome,
As happy souls in paradise bestow,
Upon a new inhabitant, who comes
To taste their blessedness, you coldly tell me,
You will depart ; it must not be, Orlando.

ORLANDO.

It must, it must.

RIVERS.

Ah, must ! then tell me wherefore ?

ORLANDO.

I wou'd not dim thy dawn of happiness,
Nor shade the brighter beams of thy good fortune,
With the dark sullen cloud that hangs o'er mine.

RIVERS.

Is this the heart of him I call'd my friend ?
Full of the graceful weakness of affection,
How have I known it bend at my request !
How lose the power of obstinate resistance,
Because his friend intreated ! This, Orlando ?
How is he chang'd !

F

O R-

34 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

Alas, how chang'd indeed !
 How dead to every relish of delight ?
 How chang'd in all but in his love for thee !
 Yet think not that my nature is grown harder,
 That I have lost that ductile, yielding heart ;
 Rivers, I have not—oh ! 'tis still too soft ;
 Ev'n now it melts, it bleeds in tenderness—
 Farewel !—I dare not trust myself—farewel !

RIVERS.

Then thou resolv'st to go ?

ORLANDO.

This very day.

RIVERS.

What do I hear ? To-day ? It must not be ;
 This is the day that makes my Julia mine.

ORLANDO.

Wed her to-day ?

RIVERS.

This day unites me to her ;
 Then stay at least till thou behold'st her mine.

ORLANDO.

Impossible ! another day were ruin.

RIVERS.

Then let me fly to Julia, and conjure her
 To bless me with her hand this very hour.

ORLANDO.

Oh ! no, no, no.

Ri-

RIVERS.

I will : in such a cause
 Surely she will forego the rigid forms
 Of cold decorum ; then, my best Orlando,
 I shall receive my Julia from thy hand ;
 The blessing will be doubled ! I shall owe
 The precious gift of love to sacred friendship !

ORLANDO.

Can'st thou bear this, my heart ?

RIVERS.

Then, my Orlando,
 Since thy unkind reserve denies my heart
 Its partnership in this thy hoard of sorrows,
 I will not press to know it ; thou shalt go,
 Soon as the holy priest has made us one :
 For oh ! 'twill sooth thee in the hour of parting ;
 To know I'm in possession of my love,
 To think I'm blest with Julia, to reflect
 Thou gav'st her to my arms, my bride ! my wife !

ORLANDO.

Ah ! my brain turns !

RIVERS.

'Tis as I thought ; I'll try him.
[Aside.]

Now answer me, Orlando, and with truth ;
 Hide nothing from thy friend—dost thou not love ?

ORLANDO.

Ha ! how ! I am betray'd ! he reads my soul.

RIVERS.

Hast thou with all that tenderness of nature,
 Preserv'd thy bosom from love's soft infection ?

36 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

Has conquering beauty never touch'd thy soul?
Come, come, I know full well—

ORLANDO.

Ha! dost thou know?
And knowing, dost thou suffer me to live?
And dost thou know my guilt, and call me friend?
He mocks but to destroy me!

RIVERS.

Come, no more;
Love is a proud, an arbitrary God,
And will not chuse as rigid fathers bid;
I know that thine has destin'd for thy bride
A Tuscan maid, but hearts disdain all force.

ORLANDO.

How's this? what, dost thou justify my passion?

RIVERS.

Applaud it—glory in it—will assist it.
She is so fair, so worthy to be lov'd,
That I shou'd be thy rival, were not she
My sister.

ORLANDO.

How?

RIVERS.

She is another Julia.

ORLANDO.

I stood upon a fearful precipice—
I'm giddy still—oh, yes! I understand thee—
Thy beauteous sister! what a wretch I've been!
Oh, Rivers! too much softness has undone me.
Yet I will never wrong the maid I love,
Nor injure thee; first let Orlando perish!

R I-

A TRAGEDY. 37

RIVERS.

Be more explicit.

ORLANDO.

For the present spare me.

Think not too hardly of me, noble Rivers!

I am a man, and full of human frailties.

When I am ready to depart, I'll see thee,

Clear all my long accounts of love and honour,

Remove thy doubts, embrace thee, and expire.

[Exit Orlando.]

Manet RIVERS.

It must be so—to what excess he loves her!

Yet wherefore not demand her? for his birth

May claim alliance with the proudest fortune.

Sure there's some hidden cause—perhaps—ah, no!

Turn from that thought, my soul! 'twas vile suspicion.

'Tis true their faiths are different—then his father,
Austere and rigid, dooms him to another.

That must not be—these bars shall be remov'd;

I'll serve him with my life, nor taste of blifs,

'Till I have fought to make Orlando happy.

[Exit.]

Re-enter ORLANDO.

ORLANDO.

Wed her to-day? wed her perhaps this hour?

Hasten the rites for *me*? I give her to him?

I stand a tame spectator of their blifs?

I live a patient witness of their joy?

First let this dagger drink my heart's warm blood.

[Takes a dagger from his bosom, then sees Julia.]

The forceress comes! oh, there's a charm about
her,

Which holds my hand, and makes me wish to live.

I shud-

38 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

I shudder at her sight ! open thou earth,
And save me from the peril of her charms !
[*Puts up the dagger.*]

Enter JULIA.

JULIA.

Methought I heard the cry of one in pain,
From hence it came ; ah, me ! my lord, Orlando !
What means that sad, that agonizing voice ?
Those sighs which rend your heart ? those frantic
looks ?

Indeed, I'm terrified. What wou'd you do ?

ORLANDO.

Die.

JULIA.

Talk you of death ? renounce the fatal thought ;
Live for my sake, Orlando.

ORLANDO.

Yes, whole ages,
Wou'd nature but extend the narrow limits
Of human life so far.

JULIA.

And for the sake
Of Rivers ; live for both ; he sends me here
To beg you wou'd delay your purpos'd parting ;
His happiness, he swears, if you are absent
Will be but half complet.

ORLANDO.

Is it to night ?
This marriage, Julia, did you say to-night ?

JULIA.

JULIA.

It is, and yet you leave us.

ORLANDO.

No—I'll stay,

Since you command, stay and expire before you.

JULIA.

What mean you?

ORLANDO.

That I'll perish at the feet

Of — Rivers.

JULIA.

Tell your sorrows to my lord ;

Upon his faithful breast, repose the weight

That presses you to earth.

ORLANDO.

Tell *him* ? Tell Rivers ?

Is he not your's ? Does not the priest now wait
To make you one ? take care, take care, my heart :
What leisure can a happy bridegroom find,
To think upon so lost a wretch as I am ?
You hate me, Julia.

JULIA.

Hate you ? how you wrong me !

Live to partake our joy.

ORLANDO.

Hope you for joy ?

JULIA.

Have I not cause ? am I not lov'd by Rivers ?
Rivers, the best, the bravest of his sex !
Whose valour fabled heroes ne'er surpass'd,

Whose

40 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Whose virtues teach the young, and charm the
old;

Whose graces are the wonder of our sex,
And envy of his own.

ORLANDO.

Enough! enough!

But, Julia, if you wou'd not here behold me,
Stretch'd at your feet a lifeless bloody corse,
Promise what I shall now request.

JULIA.

What is it?

ORLANDO.

That till to-morrow's sun, I ask no longer,
You will defer this marriage.

JULIA.

Ha! defer it?

Impossible; what wou'd my Rivers think?

ORLANDO.

No matter what; 'tis for his sake I ask it;
His peace, his happiness, perhaps his life
Depends on what I ask.

JULIA.

His life! his life!

Some dreadful thought seems lab'ring in your
breast;

Explain this horrid mystery.

ORLANDO.

I dare not.

If you comply, before to-morrow's dawn,
All will be well, the danger past, then finish
These—happy nuptials; but if you refuse

Tremble

A T R A G E D Y. 41

Tremble for him you love, the altar's self
Will be no safeguard from a madman's rage.

J U L I A.

What rage? what madman? what remorseless
villain?

Orlando—will not you protect your friend?
Think how he loves you—he would die for you—
Then save him, on my knees, I beg you save
him— [Kneels.

Oh! guard my Rivers from this bloody foe.

O R L A N D O.

Dearer than life I love him—ask no more,
But promise in the awful face of heaven,
To do what I request—and promise further,
Not to disclose the cause.

J U L I A.

Oh save him! save him!

O R L A N D O.

'Tis to preserve him that I ask it: promise
Or see me fall before you
[He draws the dagger, she still kneeling.

J U L I A.

I do promise.

Hide, hide that deadly weapon—I do promise. [Rises.

How wild you look! you tremble more than I.
I'll call my Rivers hither.

O R L A N D O.

Not for worlds.

If you have mercy in your nature, Julia,
Retire. Oh leave me quickly to myself;

G

De

42 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Do not expose me to the strong temptation
Which now assaults me ;—Yet you are not gone.

JULIA.

Be more compos'd ; I leave you with regret.

[As she goes out.]

His noble mind is shaken from its seat !

What may these transports mean ? heav'n guard
my Rivers !

As Julia goes out, enter Bertrand, he speaks behind.

BERTRAND.

Why, this is well ; this has a face ; she weeps,
He seems disordered.—Now to learn the cause,
And then make use of what I hear by chance,
As of a thing I knew. *[He listens.]*

ORLANDO.

[After a pause.]

And is she gone ?

Her parting words shot fire into my soul,

Did she not say she left me with regret ?

Her look was tender, and the starting tear,

Fill'd her bright eye ; she left me with regret—

She own'd it too.

BERTRAND.

'Twill do.

[Comes forward.]

What have you done ?

The charming Julia is dissolv'd in woe,

Her radiant eyes are quench'd in floods of tears,

For you they fall ; her blushes have confess'd it.

ORLANDO.

For me ? what say'st thou ? Julia weep for me !
Yet she is gentle, and she wou'd have wept
For thee, for any who but seem'd unhappy.

B E R -

B E R T R A N D.

Ungrateful!

O R L A N D O.

How?

B E R T R A N D.

Not by her tears, I judge,
But by her words not meant for me to hear.

O R L A N D O.

What did she say? What didst thou hear, good
Bertrand?
Speak—I'm on fire.

B E R T R A N D.

It is not safe to tell you.
Farewel! I wou'd not injure Rivers.

O R L A N D O.

Stay,
Or tell me all, or I renounce thy friendship.

B E R T R A N D.

That threat unlocks my tongue, I must not
lose thee.
Sweet Julia wept, clasp'd her fair hands, and
cried
Why was I left a legacy to Rivers,
Robb'd of the power of choice? seeing me she
started,
Wou'd have recal'd her words, blush'd, and
retir'd.

O R L A N D O.

No more; thou shalt not tempt me to my ruin;
Deny what thou hast said, deny it quickly,
E'er I am quite undone; for oh! I feel

44 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Retreating virtue touches its last post,
And my lost soul now verges on destruction.
—Bertrand! she promis'd to defer the marriage.

BERTRAND.

Then my point's gain'd, that will make Rivers
jealous. [Aside.
She loves you.

ORLANDO.

No, and even if she did
I have no hope.

BERTRAND.

You are too scrupulous.
Be bold and be successful, sure of this,
There is no fault a woman sooner pardons
Than that of which her beauty is the cause.

ORLANDO.

Shall I defraud my friend? he bled to gain her?
What! rob the dear preserver of my life
Of all that makes the happiness of his?
And yet her wondrous beauty might excuse,
Nay almost sanctify a perjury.
My soul is up in arms, my reason's lost,
And love and rage, and jealousy and honour,
Pull my divided heart, and tear my soul.

[Exit.

Manet BERTRAND.

Rave on, and beat thy wings; poor bird!
thou'rt lim'd,
And vain will be thy struggles to get loose.
—How much your very honest men lack *prudence*!
Tho' all the nobler virtues fill one scale,
Yet place but indiscretion in the other,
In worldly business, and the ways of men,
That

That single folly shall weigh down the balance,
 While the ascending virtues kick the beam.
 Here's this Orlando now, of rarest parts,
 Honest, heroic, frank and generous,
 As inexperience of mankind can make him :
 Yet shall this single weakness, this *imprudence*
 Pull down the heaviest plagues upon his head,
 And snare his heedless soul beyond redemption :
 While dull unfeeling hearts, and frozen spirits,
 Sordidly safe, secure, because untempted,
 Look up, and wonder at the generous vice,
 They wanted wit to form, and souls to dare.

End of the Third Act.

A C T

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE, an Apartment.

EMMELINA.

HOW many ways there are of being wretched!
 The avenues to happiness how few!
 When will this busy, fluttering heart be still?
 When will it cease to feel, and beat no more?
 Ev'n now it shudders with a dire presage
 Of something terrible it fears to know.
 Ent'ring, I saw my venerable father,
 In earnest conference with the Count Orlando;
 Shame and confusion fill'd Orlando's eye,
 While stern resentment fir'd my father's cheek.
 And look, he comes, with terror on his brow!
 He sees me, he beholds his child, and now
 The terror of his look is lost in love,
 In fond, paternal love.

Enter GUILDFORD.

GUILDFORD.

Come to my arms,
 And there conceal, that sweet, that asking eye,
 Lest it shou'd read what I wou'd hide for ever,
 Wou'd hide from all, but most wou'd hide from
 thee,
 Thy father's grief, his shame, his rage, his tears.

E M-

A TRAGEDY. 47

EMMELINA.

Tears! heaven and earth! behold my father weeps!

GUILDFORD.

He who has drawn this sorrow from my eyes,
Shall pay me back again in tears of blood.
'Tis for thy sake, my child.

EMMELINA.

For me, for me?
Hear, heaven, and judge; hear, heaven, and
punish me!
If any crime of mine——

GUILDFORD.

Thou art all innocence,
Just what a parent's fondest wish wou'd frame;
No fault of thine e'er stain'd thy father's cheek,
For if I blush'd it was to hear thy virtues,
And think that thou wast mine; and if I wept
It was from joy and gratitude to heaven,
That made me father of a child like thee.
Orlando!——

EMMELINA.

What of him?

GUILDFORD.

I cannot tell thee;
An honest shame, a virtuous pride forbids.

EMMELINA.

Speak.

GUILDFORD.

Canst thou not guess and spare thy father?

EM-

48 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

EMMELINA.

Perhaps—perhaps I can—and yet I will not :
Tell me the worst while I have sense to hear.
Thou wilt not speak—nay never turn away ;
Dost thou not know that fear is worse than grief?
There may be bounds to grief, fear knows no
bounds ;
“ In grief we know the worst of what we feel,
“ But who can tell the end of what we fear ?”
Grief mourns some sorrow past, and therefore
known,
But fear runs wild with horrible conjecture.

GUILDFORD.

Then hear the worst, and arm thy soul to bear
it.
He has—he has—Orlando has refused thee.

EMMELINA. (*After a long pause.*)

’Tis well—’tis very well—’tis as it shou’d be.

GUILDFORD.

Oh, there’s an eloquence in that mute woe,
Which mocks all language. Speak, relieve thy
heart,
Thy bursting heart ; thy father cannot bear it.
Am I a man ? no more of this, fond eyes !
I am grown weaker than a chidden infant,
While not a sigh escapes to tell thy pain.

EMMELINA.

See, I am calm ; I do not shed a tear ;
The warrior weeps, the woman is a hero !

GUILDFORD. (*Embraces her.*)

My glorious child ! now thou art mine indeed !
Forgive me, if I thought thee fond and weak.
I have a Roman matron for my daughter,

And

And not a feeble girl. And yet I fear,
For oh ! I know thy tenderness of soul,
I fear this silent anguish but portends
Some dread convulsion fatal to thy peace.

EMMELINA.

I will not shame thy blood; and yet, my father
Methinks thy daughter shou'd not be refus'd?
Refus'd? It has a harsh, ungrateful sound;
Thou shoud'st have found a softer term; refus'd?
And have I then been held so cheap? Refus'd?
Been treated like the light ones of my sex,
Held up to sale? been offer'd, and refus'd?

GUILDFORD.

Long have I known thy love, I thought it
mutual;
To spare thy blushes met the Count——

EMMELINA.

No more:

I am content to know I am rejected;
But save my pride the mortifying tale,
Spare me particulars of how, and when,
And do not parcel out thy daughter's shame.
No flowers of rhetoric, no arts of speech
Can change the fact—Orlando has refus'd me.

GUILDFORD.

He shall repent this outrage.

EMMELINA.

Think no more on't:

I'll teach thee how to bear it; I'll grow proud,
As gentle spirits still are apt to do
When cruel slight, or killing scorn falls on them.
Come virgin dignity, come female pride,
Come wounded modesty, come slighted love,

H

Come

50 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Come scorn, come conscious worth, come, black
despair!

Support me, arm me, fill me with my wrongs!
Sustain this feeble spirit!—But for thee,
But for thy sake, my dear, fond, injur'd father,
I think I cou'd have borne it.

GUILD FORD.

Thou hast a brother;
He shall assert thy cause.

EMMELINA.

First strike me dead!

No, in the wild distraction of my spirit,
This mad, conflicting tumult of my soul,
Hear my fond pleading—save me from that curse;
Thus I adjure thee by the dearest ties, [Kneels.
Which link society; by the sweet names
Of Parent and of Child; by all the joys
These tender claims have yielded, I adjure thee
Breathe not this fatal secret to my brother;
Oh tell him not his sister was refus'd,
That were consummate woe, full, perfect ruin!
I cannot speak the rest, but thou can'st guess it
And tremble to become a childless father.

[Exit Emmelina.

GUILD FORD.

What art thou, Life! thou lying vanity!
Thou promiser, who never mean'st to pay!
Yet let me not complain; I have a son,
Just such a son as heaven in mercy gives,
When it wou'd bless supremely; he is happy;
His ardent wishes will this day be crown'd,
He weds the maid he loves; in him, at least,
My soul will taste felicity.—He's here;
He seems disorder'd.

Enter

A T R A G E D Y. 51

Enter RIVERS.

[Not seeing Guildford.]

RIVERS.

Yes, I fondly thought
Not all the tales which malice might devise,
Not all the leagues combined hell might form
Cou'd shake her steady soul.

GUILDFORD.

What means my son?
Where is thy bride?

RIVERS.

O name her not.

GUILDFORD.

Not name her?

RIVERS.

No: if possible, not think of her,
Wou'd I cou'd help it:—Julia! oh my Julia!
Curse my fond tongue! I said I wou'd not name
her;

I did not think to do it, but my heart
Is full of her idea; her lov'd image
Fills all my soul, and shuts out other thoughts;
My lips enamour'd of the darling sound,
Dwell on her name, and all my talk is Julia.

GUILDFORD.

'Tis as it should be; e'er the midnight bell
Sound in thy raptur'd ear, this charming Julia
Will be thy wife.

RIVERS.

No.

H 2

GUILD-

52 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

GUILD FORD.

How?

RIVERS.

She has refus'd.

GUILD FORD.

Say'st thou?

RIVERS.

She has.

GUILD FORD.

Why who wou'd be a father!

Who that cou'd guess the wretchedness it brings,
But wou'd entreat of heaven to write him child-
less?

RIVERS.

'Twas but a little hour ago we parted,
As happy lovers shou'd; but when again
I sought her presence, with impatient haste,
Told her the priest, the altar, all was ready,
She blush'd, she wept, and vow'd it cou'd not be;
That reasons of importance to our peace
Forbad the nuptial rites to be perform'd
Before to-morrow.

GUILD FORD.

She consents to-morrow?

She but defers the marriage, not declines it.

RIVERS.

Mere subterfuge! mere female artifice!
What reason shou'd forbid our instant union?
Wherefore to-morrow? wherefore not to-night?
What difference cou'd a few short hours have
made?

Or if they cou'd, why not avow the cause?

GUILD-

GUILDFORD.

I have grown old in camps, have liv'd in
courts;

The toils of bright ambition have I known,
Woo'd greatness and enjoy'd it, till disgust
Follow'd possession; still I fondly look'd
Beyond the present pain for distant joy,
Look'd for the hour of honourable ease
When, safe from all the storms and wrecks of
fate,

My shatter'd bark at rest, I might enjoy
An old man's blessings, liberty and leisure,
Domestic happiness, and smiling peace.
The hour of age is come! I feel it here,
Its sorrows, pains, infirmities and cares,
But where, oh where's th' untasted peace it pro-
mis'd?

[*Exit Guildford.*

RIVERS.

I wou'd not deeper wound my father's peace
By telling him the cause of my resentment.
I must seek further; yet I know too much.
It must be so—his grief, his sudden parting:
Fool that I was, not to perceive at once—
But friendship blinded me, and love betray'd.
Bertrand was right, he told me she was chang'd,
And wou'd, on some pretence, delay the marriage.
I hop'd 'twas malice all.—Yonder she comes,
Dissolv'd in tears; I cannot see them fall,
And he a man; I will not, dare not meet her,
Her blandishments wou'd sooth me to false peace,
And if she ask'd it, I shou'd pardon all.

[*Exit.*

Enter

54 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Enter JULIA.

JULIA.

Stay, Rivers, stay, barbarian! hear me speak;
Return, inhuman!—best belov'd! return,
Oh! I will tell thee all, restore thy peace,
Kneel at thy feet, and sue for thy forgiveness.
He hears me not—alas! he will not hear.
Break, thou poor heart, since Rivers is unkind.

Enter ORLANDO.

ORLANDO.

Julia in tears?

JULIA.

Alas! you have undone me!
Behold the wretched victim of her promise?
I urg'd, at your request, the fatal suit
Which has destroy'd my peace; Rivers suspects
me,
And I am wretched.

ORLANDO.

Better 'tis to weep
A temporary ill, than weep forever;
That anguish must be mine.

JULIA.

Ha! weep for ever?
Can they know wretchedness who know not love?

ORLANDO.

Not love! oh, cruel friendship! tyrant honour!

JULIA.

Friendship! alas, how cold is that to love!

OR-

ORLANDO.

Too well I know it ; both alike destroy me,
I am the slave of both, and more than either
The slave of honour.

JULIA.

If you then have felt
The bitter agonies——

ORLANDO.

Talk *you* of agonies ?
You who are lov'd again ? oh, they are mine,
The pangs, the agonies of hopeless passion,
Yes, I do love—I doat, I die for love.

JULIA.

I understand you——Emmelina !

ORLANDO. (*Falls at her feet.*)

Julia !

JULIA.

How ?

ORLANDO.

Nay never start—I know I am a villain ;
I know thy hand is destin'd to another,
That other is my friend, that friend the man
To whom I owe my life. Yes, I adore thee ;
Spite of the black ingratitude adore thee ;
I doat upon my friend, and yet betray him,
I'm bound to Emmelina, yet forsake her,
I honour virtue while I follow guilt,
I love the noble Rivers more than life,
But Julia more than honour.

JULIA.

Hold ? astonishment
Has seal'd my lips ; whence sprung this monstrous
daring ?

OR-

56 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:

ORLANDO. (*Rises.*)

From despair.

JULIA.

What can you hope from me?

ORLANDO.

Death! I nor hope, nor look for aught but death.

Think'st thou I need reproof? think'st thou I need
To be reminded that my love's a crime?
That every moral tie forbids my passion,
And angry heaven will show'r its vengeance on
me?

But mark—I do not, will not, can't repent;
I do not even wish to love thee less;
I glory in my crime. Come, crown my misery,
Triumph, exult in thy pernicious beauty,
Then stab me with the praises of my rival,
The man on earth—whom most I ought to love.

JULIA.

I leave thee to remorse, and to that penitence
Thy crime demands. (*Going.*)

ORLANDO.

A moment stay.

JULIA.

I dare not.

ORLANDO.

Hear all my rival's worth, and all my guilt.
The unsuspecting Rivers sent me to thee,
To plead his cause; I basely broke my trust,
And, like a villain, pleaded for myself.

J u-

JULIA.

Did he? Did Rivers? Then he loves me still—
Quick let me seek him out.

ORLANDO. (*Takes out the dagger.*)

First take this dagger,
Had you not forc'd it from my hand to-day,
I had not liv'd to know this guilty moment:
Take it, present it to the happy Rivers,
Tell him to plunge it in a traitor's heart,
Tell him his friend, Orlando, is that traitor,
"Tell him Orlando forg'd the guilty tale,
"Tell him Orlando is the only foe,"
Who at the altar wou'd have murder'd Rivers,
And then have died himself.

JULIA.

Farewel—repent—think better.

[*Exit Julia.*[*As she goes out, he still looks after her.**Enter RIVERS.*

RIVERS.

Turn, villain, turn.

ORLANDO.

Ha! Rivers here?

RIVERS.

Yes, Rivers.

ORLANDO.

Gape wide, thou friendly earth, for ever hide
me,
Rise Alps, ye crushing mountains bury me.

I

R I-

58 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

RIVERS.

Nay, turn, look on me.

ORLANDO.

Rivers! oh, I cannot,
I dare not, I have wrong'd thee.

RIVERS.

Doubly wrong'd me;
Thy complicated crimes cry out for vengeance.

ORLANDO.

Take it.

RIVERS.

But I wou'd take it as a man.
Draw. [Rivers *Draws*.

ORLANDO.

Not for a thousand worlds.

RIVERS.

Not fight?
Why thou'rt a coward too as well as villain:
I shall despise as well as hate thee.

ORLANDO.

Do;
Yet wrong me not, for if I am a coward
'Tis but to thee; there does not breathe the man,
Thyself excepted, who durst call me so
And live; but, oh! 'tis sure to heaven and thee,
I am the veriest coward guilt e'er made.
Now as thou art a man revenge thyself;
Strike!

RIVERS.

No, not stab thee like a base assassin,
But meet thee as a foe.

OR-

ORLANDO.

Think of thy wrongs.

RIVERS.

I feel them here.

ORLANDO.

Think of my treachery.

RIVERS.

Oh, wherefore wast thou false? how have I
lov'd thee!

ORLANDO.

Of that no more: think of thy father's grief,
Of Emmelina's wrongs——

RIVERS.

Provoke me not.

ORLANDO.

Of Julia——

RIVERS.

Ha! I shall forget my honour,
And do a brutal violence upon thee,
Wou'd tarnish my fair fame. Villain, and coward!
Traytor! will nothing rouse thee.

ORLANDO. (*Drawing.*)

Swelling heart!

Yet this I have deserv'd, all this, and more.

As they prepare to fight, enter EMMELINA hastily.

EMMELINA.

Lend me your swiftneſs lightnings—'tis too late.
See they're engag'd—oh no—they live, both live.
Hold, cruel men!

R I-

60 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

RIVERS.

Unlucky ! 'tis my sister.

EMMELINA.

Ye men of blood ! if yet you have not lost,
All sense of human kindness, all compassion,
If ever you were dear to one another,
If ever you desire or look for mercy,
When in the wild extremity of anguish,
You supplicate that judge who has declared
That vengeance is his own—Oh, hear me now,
Hear a fond wretch whom misery has made bold,
Spare, spare each other's life—spare your own souls.

ORLANDO. (*To Rivers.*)

Why has thy lagging vengeance been so slow ?

EMMELINA.

Does death want engines ? is his power grown
weak ?

“ Has fell disease forgotten to destroy ? ”
Are there not pestilence, and spotted plagues ?
Devouring deluges, consuming fires,
Earthquakes, and hurricanes, and haggard famine,
That man must perish by the hand of man,
Nay, to complete the horror, friend by friend ?

RIVERS.

What ! shall I then endure this outrage tamely ?
Is honour nothing ?

EMMELINA.

Honour ! 'tis a phantom,
Who having nothing solid in himself,
Decks his thin form in the bright robe of virtue:
Honour ! I know him well, 'tis the fell demon
Who feeds on orphans tears, and widows groans,
And

And flakes his impious thirst in human blood.
 " 'Tis the arch-fiend's prime instrument of mischief,
 " His grand device to people his dark realms
 " With noble spirits, who but for this curst honour
 " Had been at peace on earth, or bless'd in heaven."
 With this *false* honour Christians have no com-
 merce,
 Religion disavows, and truth disowns it.

ORLANDO. (*Throws away his sword.*)
 An angel speaks, and angels claim obedience.

RIVERS. (*To Orlando.*)
 This is the heart thou hast wrong'd.

EMMELINA. (*Comes up to Orlando.*)
 I pity thee;
 Calamity has taught me how to pity;
 Before I knew distress my heart was hard,
 But now it melts at every touch of woe.
 " Baneful prosperity corrupts the heart,
 " But wholesome sufferings bring it back to virtue;
 Rivers, he once was good and just like thee;
 Who shall be proud and think he stands secure,
 If thy Orlando's false?

RIVERS.
 Think of his crime.

EMMELINA.
 Oh, think of his temptation! think 'twas Julia;
 Thy heart cou'd not resist her, how shou'd his?
 It is the very error of his friendship;
 Your souls were fram'd so very much alike,
 He cou'd not chuse but love whom Rivers lov'd.

62 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

Think'st thou there is in death a pang like this?
Strike, my brave friend, be sudden and be silent.
Death, which is terrible to happy men,
To me will be a blessing; I have lost
All that cou'd make life dear; I've lost my
friend,
I've stab'd the peace of mind of that fair creature,
I have surviv'd my honour; this is dying!
The mournful fondness of officious love
Will plant no thorns upon my dying pillow,
No precious tears embalm my memory,
But curses follow it.

EMMELINA.

See Rivers melts;

He pities thee.

ORLANDO.

I'll spare thy noble heart
The pain of punishing; Orlando's self
Revenge both.

[Goes to stab himself with the dagger.]

EMMELINA.

Barbarian! kill me first.

RIVERS. *(Snatching the dagger.)*

Thou shalt not die, I swear I love thee still;
That secret sympathy which long has bound us,
Pleads for thy life with sweet but strong intreaty.
Thou shalt repair the wrongs of that dear saint,
And be again my friend.

ORLANDO.

Oh, hear me.

EMMELINA.

No.

I cannot stoop to live on charity,

And

And what but charity is love compell'd?
 I've been a weak, a fond, believing woman,
 Easy, 'tis true, beyond my sexes softness,
 But with a woman's weakness, I've her pride;
 I lov'd with virtue, yet I fondly lov'd;
 That passion fix'd my fate, determin'd all,
 And stain'd the colour of my life with woe.
 Hearts that love well, love long, they love but
 once.

My peace thou hast destroy'd, my honour's mine:
 She who aspir'd to gain Orlando's heart,
 Shall never owe Orlando's hand to pity.

[Exit Emmelina.]

ORLANDO. (*After a pause.*)

And I still live!

RIVERS.

Farewel! shou'd I stay longer
 I might forget my vow.

ORLANDO.

Yet hear me, Rivers.

[Exit Rivers, Orlando following.]

Enter BERTRAND on the other side.

BERTRAND.

How's this? my fortune fails me, both alive!
 I thought by stirring Rivers to this quarrel,
 There was at least an equal chance against him.
 I work invisible, and like the tempter,
 My agency is seen in its effects.
 Well, *honest* Bertrand! now for Julia's letter.

[Takes out a letter.]

This fond epistle of a love-sick maid,
 I've sworn to give, but did not swear to whom.
 Give it my love, said she, my dearest lord:
 Rivers she meant; there's no address—that's lucky.
 Then

64 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

Then where's the harm? Orlando is a lord,
As well as Rivers, loves her too as well.

[Breaks open the letter.]

I must admire your stile—your pardon, fair one.

[Runs over it.]

Do I not tread in air, and walk on stars?
There's not a word but fits Orlando's case
As well as Rivers';—tender to excess—
No name—'twill do; his faith in me is boundless;
Then, as the brave are still, he's unsuspecting,
And credulous beyond a woman's weakness.

[Going out he spies the dagger.]

Orlando's dagger—ha! 'tis greatly thought.
This may do noble service; such a scheme!
My genius catches fire! the bright idea
Is form'd at once, and fit for glorious action.

[Exit.]

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

A C T T H E F I F T H.

S C E N E, the Garden.

B E R T R A N D.

T WAS here we were to meet; where does
he stay?

This compound of strange contradicting parts,
Too flexible for virtue, yet too virtuous
To make a glorious, bold, successful villain.
Conscience, be still; preach not remorse to me;
Remorse is for the luckless, failing villain:
He who succeeds repents not; penitence
Is but another name for ill success.
Was Nero penitent when Rome was burnt?
No: but had Nero been a petty villain,
Subject to laws and liable to fear,
Nero perchance had been a penitent.
He comes:—This paper makes him all my own.

Enter O R L A N D O.

O R L A N D O.

At length this wretched, tempest beaten bark
Seems to have found its haven: I'm resolv'd;
My wav'ring principles are fix'd to honour;
My virtue gathers force, my mind grows strong,
I feel an honest confidence within,
A precious earnest of returning peace.

K

B E R-

66 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

BERTRAND.

Who feels secure stands on the verge of ruin.
[*Aside.*

Trust me it joys my heart to see you thus :
What have I not attempted for your sake !
My love for you has warp'd my honest nature,
And friendship has infring'd on higher duties.

ORLANDO.

It was a generous fault.

BERTRAND.

Yet 'twas a fault.
Oh for a flinty heart that knows no weakness,
But moves right onward, unseduc'd by friendship,
And all the soft affections of the soul !

ORLANDO.

This is my last farewell ; absence alone
Can prop my stagg'ring virtue.

BERTRAND.

You're resolv'd :
Then Julia's favours come too late.

ORLANDO.

What mean'st thou ?

BERTRAND.

Nay, nothing : I renounce those weak affections
Which have misled us both ; I too repent,
And will return the letter back to Julia.

ORLANDO.

Letter ? what letter ? Julia write to me ?
I will not see it.—What wou'd Rivers say ?
Bertrand ! he sav'd my life :—I will not see it.

BER-

B E R T R A N D.

I do not mean you shou'd; nay I refus'd
To bring it you.

O R L A N D O.

Refus'd to bring the letter?

B E R T R A N D.

Yes, I refus'd at first.

O R L A N D O.

Then thou hast brought it?
My faithful Bertand!—come.

B E R T R A N D.

'Twere best not to see it.

O R L A N D O.

Not see it? how, not read my Julia's letter?
An empire shou'd not bribe me to forbear.
Come, come.

B E R T R A N D.

Alas how frail is human virtue:
My resolution melts, and tho' I mean not
To trust you with the letter, I must tell you
With what a thousand, thousand charms she gave it:
Take this, said she, and as Orlando reads it,
Attend to every accent of his voice,
Watch every little motion of his eye,
Mark if it sparkles when he talks of Julia,
If when he speaks, poor Julia be the theme,
If when he sighs his bosom heave for Julia,
Note every trifling act, each little look,
For, oh! of what importance is the least
To hapless Julia.

68 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

The delicious poison
Has tainted all my soul ! give me the letter.

[Bertrand offers it, Orlando refuses.]

Ha ! where's the virtue which but now I boasted ?
'Tis lost, 'tis gone—conflicting passions tear me.
I am again a villain.—Give it—no ;
A spark of honour strikes upon my soul.
Take back the letter ; take it back, good Ber-
trand !

Spite of myself compel me to be just :
I will not read it.

BERTRAND.

How your friend will thank you !
Another day makes Julia his for ever.
Even now the great pavilion is prepared,
There will the nuptial rites be solemniz'd,
Julia already dress'd in bridal robes,
Like some fair victim.—

ORLANDO.

O no more, no more.
What can she write to me ?

BERTRAND.

Some prudent counsel.

ORLANDO.

Then wherefore fear to read it ? come, I'll
venture :
What wondrous harm can one poor letter do ?
The letter—quick—the letter.

BERTRAND.

Since you force me.

[Gives it.]

O R-

A T R A G E D Y. 69

O R L A N D O.

Be firm, ye shivering nerves. It is her hand.

[*Reads.*

“ To spare my blushes Bertand brings you this.
How have you wrong'd me! you believed me
false;

'Twas my compassion for your friend deceiv'd
you.

Meet me at midnight in the great Pavilion;
Till then avoid my presence; from that hour
My future life is your's; your once-lov'd friend
I pity and esteem, but you alone
Possess the heart of Julia.”

This to me!

I dream, I rave, 'tis all Elysium round me,
And thou, my better angel! this to me?

B E R T R A N D.

I'm dumb: oh Julia, what a fall is thine?

O R L A N D O.

What is it such a crime to love? away——
Thy moral comes too late; thou shoud'st have
urg'd

Thy caution sooner, or not urg'd at all;
Thou shoud'st—alas! I know not what I say—
But this I know, the charming Julia loves me,
Appoints a meeting at the dead of night!
She loves! The rest is all beneath my care.

B E R T R A N D.

Be circumspect; the hour is just at hand;
Since all is ready for your purpos'd parting,
See your attendants be dispos'd aright,
Near the Pavilion Gate.

O R -

70 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

Why so?

BERTRAND.

Why so?

Make Julia the companion of your flight;
'Tis what she means, you must not mind her struggles;

A little gentle violence perhaps,
To make her yield to what she had resolv'd,
And save her pride, she'll thank you for it after.

ORLANDO.

Take her by force? I like not that; O Bertrand,
There is a mutinous spirit in my blood,
That wars against my conscience.—Tell my Julia,
I will not fail to meet her.

BERTRAND.

I obey.

Be near the garden; I shall soon return.

[Exit Bertrand.]

ORLANDO.

This giant sin whose bulk so lately scar'd me,
Shrinks to a common size; I now embrace
What I but lately fear'd to look upon.
Why what a progress have I made in guilt!
Where is the hideous form it lately wore?
It grows familiar to me; I can think,
Contrive, and calmly meditate on mischief,
Talk temp'rately of sin, and cherish crimes
I lately so abhor'd, that had they once
But glanc'd upon the surface of my fancy
I had been terrified. Oh conscience! conscience!

[Exit Orlando.]

Scene

*Scene changes to another part of the Garden.
A grand Pavilion. The moon shining.*

Enter RIVERS in a melancholy attitude.

RIVERS.

Ye dear, ye well known scenes of former bliss!
Scenes which I hop'd were fated to bestow
Still dearer blessings in a beauteous bride!
Thou gay pavilion which art dress'd so fair
To witness my espousals, why, ah! why
Art thou adorn'd in vain? Yet still I court thee,
For Julia lov'd thee once:—dear faithless Julia!
Yet is she false? Orlando swore she was not:
It may be so; yet she avoids my presence,
Keeps close from every eye, but most from mine.

Enter ORLANDO.

ORLANDO.

Ha! Rivers here? wou'd I had shunn'd his
walks?
How shall I meet the man I mean to wrong?

RIVERS.

Why does Orlando thus expose his health
To this cold air?

ORLANDO.

I ask the same of Rivers?

RIVERS.

Because this solitude, this silent hour
Feeds melancholy thoughts, and sooths my soul.
My Julia will not see me.

ORLANDO.

How?

RIV-

72 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

RIVERS.

She denies me
Admittance to her presence.

ORLANDO.

Then I'm lost,
Confirm'd a villain, now 'tis plain she loves me. *[Aside.]*

RIVERS.

She will not pardon me this single fault
Of jealous love, tho' thou hadst clear'd up all.

ORLANDO.

Wait 'till to-morrow, all will then be known.

RIVERS.

Wait 'till to-morrow! Look at that pavilion;
All was prepar'd; yes, I dare tell thee all,
For thou art honest now.

ORLANDO.

[Aside.]
That wounds too deeply.

RIVERS.

Soon as the midnight bell gave the glad summons,
This dear pavilion had beheld her mine.

ORLANDO.

All will be well to-morrow.— *(Aside.)* — If I
stay
I shall betray the whole. — Good night, my
Rivers.

RIVERS.

Good night; go you to rest; I still shall walk.
[Exit Orlando.]

RIV-

A T R A G E D Y. 73

R I V E R S.

Yes, I will trace her haunts ; my too fond heart
Like a poor bird that's hunted from its nest,
Dares not return, and knows not how to go ;
Still it delights to hover round the spot
Which lately held its treasure ; eyes it still,
And with heart-breaking tenderness surveys
The scene of joys which never may return.

[Exit.

Scene changes to another Part of the Garden.

Re-enter O R L A N D O.

O R L A N D O.

Did he say rest ? talk'd he of rest to me ?
Can rest and guilt associate ? but no matter,
I cannot now go back ; then such a prize
Wou'd make archangels forfeit their allegiance.
I dare not think ; reflection leads to madness.

Enter B E R T R A N D.

Bertrand ! I was not made for this dark work ;
My heart recoils—poor Rivers !

B E R T R A N D.

What of Rivers ?

O R L A N D O.

I've seen him.

B E R T R A N D.

Where ?

O R L A N D O.

Before the great pavilion.

B E R T R A N D. (*Aside.*)

That's lucky, saves me trouble, were he absent,
Half of my scheme had fail'd.

L

O R -

74 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

He's most unhappy;
He wish'd me rest, spoke kindly to me, Bertrand;
How, how can I betray him?

BERTRAND.

He deceives you;
He's on the watch, else wherefore now abroad,
At this late hour? beware of treachery.

ORLANDO.

I am myself a traytor.

BERTRAND.

Come, no more,
The time draws near, you know the cypress walk,
'Tis dark.

ORLANDO.

The fitter for dark deeds like mine:

BERTRAND.

I have prepared your men, when the bell strikes
Go into the pavilion; there you'll find
The blushing maid, who with faint screams per-
haps
Will feign resentment. But you want a sword.

ORLANDO.

A sword!—I'll murder no one—why a sword?

BERTRAND.

'Tis prudent to be arm'd; no words, take mine;
There may be danger, Julia may be lost,
This night secures or loses her for ever.
The cypress walk—spare none who look like spies.

ORLANDO. (*Looking at the sword.*)

How deeply is that soul involv'd in guilt,
Who does not hold communion with it's thoughts,
Nor ask itself what it designs to do!

[Exit Orlando.]

BER-

BERTRAND.

Thus far propitious fortune fills my sails;
 Yet still I doubt his milkiness of soul;
 My next exploit must be to find out Rivers,
 And, as from Julia, give him a feign'd message,
 To come in haste to the pavilion gate;
 There shall Orlando's well-arm'd servants meet
 him,
 And take his righteous soul from this bad world;
 If they shou'd fail, his honest cousin Bertrand
 Will help him onward in his way to heav'n.
 Then, this good dagger which I'll leave beside him,
 Will, while it proves the deed, conceal the doer;
 'Tis not an English instrument of mischief,
 And who'll suspect good Bertrand wore a dagger?
 To clear me further, I've no sword—unarm'd—
 Poor helpless Bertrand! Then no longer poor,
 But Guildford's heir, and lord of these fair lands.
 [Exit Bertrand.]

Enter ORLANDO on the other side.

ORLANDO.

Draw thy dun curtain round, oh, night! black
 night!
 Inspirer and concealer of foul crimes!
 Thou wizard night! who conjur'st up foul thoughts,
 And mak'st him bold who else wou'd start at guilt;
 Beneath thy horrid veil he dares to act,
 What in broad day he wou'd not dare to think.
 Oh, night! thou hid'st the dagger's point from
 men,
 But can'st thou screen th' assassin from himself?
 Shut out the eye of heaven? extinguish conscience?
 Or heal the wounds of honour? Oh, no, no, no!
 Yonder she goes—the guilty, charming Julia!
 My genius drives me on—Julia, I come.

[Runs off.]

L 2

SCENE

76 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

SCENE, *the Pavilion.*

*An arch'd Door, through which JULIA and her Maid
come forward on the Stage.*

JULIA.

Not here? not come? look out, my faithful
Anna.

There was a time—oh, time for ever dear!
When Rivers wou'd not make his Julia wait.
Perhaps he blames me, thinks the appointment
bold,

Too daring, too unlike his bashful Julia;
But 'twas the only means my faithful love
Devis'd to save him from Orlando's rashness.
I have kept close, refus'd to see my Rivers;
Now all is still, and I have ventur'd forth,
With this kind maid, and virtue for my guard,
Come, we'll go in, he cannot sure be long.

[They go into the Pavilion.]

*Enter ORLANDO, his sword drawn and bloody,
his hair dishevell'd.*

ORLANDO.

What have I done? a deed that earns damnation.
Where shall I fly? Ha! the pavilion door!
'Tis open—it invites me to fresh guilt;
I'll not go in—let that fall'n angel wait,
And curse her stars as I do.

[The midnight Bell strikes.]

Hark! the bell!

Demons of darkness, what a peal is that!
Again! 'twill wake the dead—I cannot bear it.
'Tis terrible as the last trumpeter's sound!
That was the marriage signal! powers of hell,
What blessings have I blasted! Rivers!—Julia!

[Julia comes out.]

JULIA.

JULIA.

My Rivers calls; I come, I come.—Orlando!

ORLANDO.

Yes,

Thou beautiful deceiver! 'tis that wretch.

JULIA.

That perjur'd friend.

ORLANDO.

That devil!

JULIA.

I'm betray'd.

Why art thou here?

ORLANDO.

Thou canst make ruin lovely,

Or I wou'd ask, why did'st thou bring me here?

JULIA.

I bring thee here?

ORLANDO.

Yes, thou, bright falsehood! thou.

JULIA.

No, by my hopes of heaven! where is my Rivers?

Some crime is meant.

ORLANDO. (*Catches her hand.*)

Julia! the crime is done.

Dost thou not shudder? art thou not amaz'd?

Art thou not cold, and blasted with my touch?

Is not thy blood congeal'd? does no black horror

Fill thy prefaging soul? look at these hands;

Julia! they're stain'd with blood; blood, Julia,
blood!

Nay, look upon them.

JULIA.

Ah! I dare not.—Blood!

OR-

78 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

Yes, thou dear false one, with the noblest blood,
That ever stain'd a dark assassin's hand.
Had not thy letter with the guilty message
To meet thee here this hour, blinded my honour,
And wrought my passion into burning phrenzy,
Whole worlds shou'd not have bribed me.

JULIA.

Letter and message?

I sent thee none:

ORLANDO.

Then Bertrand has betray'd me,
And I have done a deed beyond all reach,
All hope of mercy—I have murder'd Rivers.

JULIA.

Oh! (*She falls into her maid's arms.*)

ORLANDO.

Here's the reward which love prepar'd for murder!
Thus hell rewards its instruments!

Enter GUILDFORD, with Servants.

GUILDFORD.

Where is he?
Where is this midnight murderer? this assassin?
This is the place Orlando's servant nam'd.

ORLANDO.

The storm comes on. 'Tis Guildford, good old man!
Behold the wretch accurst of heaven and thee.

GUILDFORD.

Accurst of both indeed. How, Julia fainting?

ORLANDO.

She's pure as holy truth; she was deceiv'd,
And so was I.

GUILD FORD.

Who tempted thee to this ?

O R L A N D O.

Love, hell, and Bertrand.

J U L I A. (*Recovering.*)

Give me back my Rivers,
I will not live without him.—Oh, my father !

GUILD FORD.

Father ! I'm none ; I am no more a father ;
I have no child ; my son is basely murder'd,
And my sweet daughter at the fatal news
Is quite bereft of reason,

O R L A N D O.

Seize me, bind me :
If death's too great a mercy let me live :
Drag me to some damp dungeon's horrid gloom,
Deep as the centre, dark as my offences ;
Come, do your office, take my sword : oh, Ber-
trand,
Yet, e'er I perish, cou'd it reach thy heart !

[*They seize Orlando.*]

J U L I A.

I will not long survive thee, oh, my Rivers.

Enter RIVERS with the Dagger.

R I V E R S.

Who calls on Rivers with a voice so sad,
So full of sweetness ?

GUILD FORD.

Ah, my son !

J U L I A.

'Tis he, 'tis he !

[*Julia and Rivers run into each other's arms. Or-
lando breaks from the guards and falls on his knees.*]

O R-

80 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

He lives, he lives, the god-like Rivers lives !
Hear it, ye host of heaven ! witness ye saints,
Recording angels tell it in your songs,
Breathe it celestial spirits to your lutes,
That Rivers lives !

JULIA.

Explain this wonderous happiness.

RIVERS.

'Twas Bertrand whom Orlando killed ; the tray-
tor
Has with his dying breath confess'd the whole.

ORLANDO.

Good sword, I thank thee !

RIVERS.

In his confusion
Orlando miss'd the path he was to take,
And pass'd thro' that where Bertrand lay conceal'd,
To watch th' event ; Orlando thought 'twas me,
And that I play'd him false ; the walk was dark.
In Bertrand's bloody hand I found this dagger,
With which he meant to take my life ; but how
Were you alarm'd ?

GUILDFORD.

One of Orlando's men,
Whom wealth cou'd never bribe to join in mur-
der—

ORLANDO.

Murder ! I bribe to murder ?

RIVERS.

No, 'twas Bertrand
Brib'd them to that curst deed ; he lov'd my sister.

OR-

A T R A G E D Y. 81

ORLANDO.

Exquisite villain!

GUILDFORD.

Fly to Emmelina,
If any spark of reason yet remain,
Tell her the joyful news.—Alas she's here!
Wildly she flies—Ah, my distracted child!

Enter EMMELINA distracted.

EMMELINA.

Off, off! I will have way! ye shall not hold me:
I come to seek my love; is he not here?
Tell me, ye virgins, have ye seen my love,
Or know you where his flocks repose at noon?
My love is comely—sure you must have seen him,
'Tis the great promiser! he who vows and swears,
In truth he might deceive a wiser maid.
I lov'd him once, he then was innocent,
He was no murderer then, indeed he was not,
He had not killed my brother.

RIVERS.

Nor has now;

Thy brother lives.

EMMELINA.

I know it—yes, he lives
Among the cherubim. Murd'ers too will live:
But where? I'll tell you where—down, down,
down down.
How deep it is! 'tis fathomless—'tis dark!
No—there's a pale blue flame—ah, poor Orlando!

GUILDFORD.

My heart will burst.

M

O R-

82 THE FATAL FALSEHOOD.

ORLANDO.

Pierce mine and that will ease it.

EMMELINA. (*Comes up to her father.*)

I knew a maid who lov'd—but she was mad—
Fond foolish girl! Thank heav'n I am not mad;
Yet the afflicting angel has been with me;
But do not tell my father, he wou'd grieve,
Sweet, good, old man—perhaps he'd weep to hear
it:

I never saw my father weep but once,
I'll tell you when it was—I did not weep;
'Twas when—but soft, my brother must not know
it,

'Twas when his poor fond daughter was refus'd.

GUILDFORD.

Who can bear this?

ORLANDO.

I will not live to bear it.

EMMELINA. (*Comes up to Orlando.*)

Take comfort, thou poor wretch! I'll not ap-
pear

Against thee, nor shall Rivers; but blood must,
Blood will appear; there's no concealing blood.
What's that? my brother's ghost—it vanishes;

[*Catches hold of Rivers.*]

Stay, take me with thee, take me to the skies;
I have thee fast; thou shalt not go without me.
But hold—may we not take the murd'rer with us?
That look says no. Why then I'll not go with
thee.

Yet hold me fast—'tis dark—I'm lost—I'm gone.

[*Dies.*
OR-

A T R A G E D Y.

83

ORLANDO.

One crime makes many needful : this day's sin
Blots out a life of virtue. Good old man !
My bosom bleeds for thee ; thy child is dead,
And I the cause. 'Tis but a poor atonement,
But I can make no other. *[Stabs himself.]*

RIVERS.

What hast thou done ?

ORLANDO.

Fill'd up the measure of my sins. Oh, mercy !
Eternal goodness pardon this last guilt !
Rivers, thy hand—ah me ! farewell ! forgive.
[Dies.]

[The curtain falls to soft music.]



End of the Fifth Act.

Lately published, by the same Author.

- I. Effays on various Subjects, principally designed for young ladies, 3d edition, price 3s. few'd.
- II. Percy : a Tragedy. 2d edition. 1s 6d
- III. Sir Eldred of the Bower, and the Bleeding Rock, Legendary Tales. 2d edition. 1s 6d
- IV. Ode to Dragon, Mr. Garrick's house dog at Hampton, price 6d
- V. The Search after Happiness, a pastoral drama. 7th edition, price 1s 6d
- VI. The Inflexible Captive, a Tragedy. 3d edition, 1s 6d.

Printed for T. Cadell in the Strand.